Utilization of Electronic Information Products by the Users of First Grade College Libraries of Moodbidri (Karnataka): A Study

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Abstract

Academic libraries have always aimed to fulfill their research objectives and ambitions by using any means at their disposal, particularly in these times when drastic changes have been occurred because of the Information and communication technology application on libraries. Today, electronic information products have become the essence of every intellectual activity of higher education. In this context, the present paper throws light on the use of electronic form of information products or e-resources by the users of the first grade college libraries of Moodbidri in Karnataka state (India). The main purpose of the study is to determine awareness of e-resources, use of e-resources, the skills and the various purposes of their use by the users. Further, the paper aims to address the problems faced by them while accessing e-resources and their views on usefulness of e-resources compared to that of print resources.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present age of information technology, libraries and information centres have become an integral part of its parent organizations due to the adoption of new technological storage, processing, retrieval and service. So also in case of a college library which tries hard to develop in each student a sense of responsibility in the pursuit of knowledge. Majority of the college libraries do not have proper facilities to meet the needs of their users. Among other things, the quality of higher education and research, especially at the graduate level, depends upon the standard of the college libraries, the information products available, the usage and the management of its services to its users. These libraries are now being challenged by a new environment which demands changes in the attitudes and skills towards information handling. The traditional approaches to information processing are renovated by the advent interaction of modern computer technologies and have become a challenging task to the librarians. Therefore, the libraries need to organize and manage the resources in relation to the information use and requirement of the users. In this regard, it is essential to know the opinions and levels of awareness of the users towards their seeking information and its management and services render to them in the First Grade College libraries under study.

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION PRODUCTS

Information Products which are available in electronic form are called as Electronic Information Products or E-resources. Reading materials which are available in the form of CD, DVD, Video Tapes, Pen Drive, Audio Tapes or any other electronic device in physical form are called as offline e-resources. E-resources which are available over network are called as online or virtual e-resources. Some of the most frequently used e-resources are E-journals, E-books, Full-text databases, indexing and abstracting databases, reference databases, CD-ROM, numeric and statistical databases, E-images, E-audio/visual resources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- ➢ To examine the users' awareness about the electronic information products in the First Grade College Libraries of Moodbidri
- ➢ To survey the users' opinions towards the available information products

> ➤ To determine the extent of use of the various information products
> ➤ To examine the use of various web tools among the users
> ➤ To find out the place of accessing the electronic information products
> ➤ To find out the different searching techniques for accessing the electronic information products
> ➤ To find out hindrances faced by users while accessing the electronic information products

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Library service is the supreme activity to attract the attention of the user community. It is more so in the case of a college library also. The impact of IT environment in college libraries on the management of information products is highly significant. The library users ought to evaluate and assess the usability of the library resources in the light of the huge investment made in acquiring the information products, resources and the cost of the manpower in managing the library activity. This study would help to assess the impact of these electronic information products on the college library users and also this study will help improve the collection and utility of E-resources.

METHODOLOGY

Moodbidri, a town of Jain temples, is a renowned historical place in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka State. This town is known for the educational institutions as well. Sri Mahaveera College(SMC), Sri Dhavala College (SDC) and Alvas' College(AC) are the 3 First Grade Colleges of this town (affiliated to Mangalore University), impart under graduate education. To conduct the present study, these three colleges of Moodbidri have been chosen. The study is based on survey (questionnaire) method. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. Majority of the questions were objective type. The questionnaires were distributed among the faculty and final degree students of these colleges. The data thus collected has been classified and interpreted by using statistical method.

DATA ANALYSIS

Distribution of Questionnaires and Responses
Table 1 indicates the distribution of questionnaires and response rate. The questionnaires were distributed to the faculty and final year degree students of all the three colleges. In total 300

questionnaires were distributed and all the 300 users have responded. From the table, it is observed that the response rate is 100%.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires and Responses

Respondents	Distributed	Received	%
Sri Mahaveera College (SMC)	100	100	100
Sri Dhavala College (SDC)	100	100	100
Alvas' College (AC)	100	100	100
Total	**300**	**300**	**100**

Awareness of Electronic Information Products
Table 2 shows the level of awareness about Electronic Information Products among the users of three colleges under study. Out of the 300 respondents, 241 (80.33%) respondents are aware of E-resources and 59 (19.67%) of the respondents are not aware of E-Resources. It is good to know that more than 80% of respondents are aware of Electronic Information Products. But there is also a concern about the users who are not aware of Electronic Information Products. Care should be taken by the librarians of respective colleges to see that the advantages of Electronic information products should be used by all the users.

Table 2: Awareness of Electronic Information Products

Respondents	Yes	No	Total
SMC	80	20	100
SDC	73	27	100
AC	88	12	100
Total	**241 (80.33)**	**59(19.67)**	**300 (100)**

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage on row totals

Preference to use Electronic Information Products in Addition to Printed Documents
Introduction of Information and Communication Technology opened new ways to communicate information and knowledge among the user community. In addition to printed information products, users are also interested to use electronic information products. It is because of the flexibility, speed of access, utilization by multiple users of E-resources. Out of the 300 respondents 244 which are

81.33 % have given preference for E-resources in addition to print resources which clearly indicates the strong need for E-resources with existing print resources.

Table 3: Preference to use Electronic Information Products in addition to Printed Documents

Respondents	Yes	No	Total
SMC	89	11	100
SDC	76	24	100
AC	79	21	100
Total	**244 (81.33)**	**56(18.67)**	**300(100)**

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage on row totals

Purpose of Accessing Electronic Information Products

Users of the college library use the electronic information products for different purposes. Table 4 shows the purpose of accessing E-resources by the users of first grade college libraries under study. Out of the 300 respondents, 253 (84.33%) respondents are accessing electronic information products for preparing seminars, 250 (83.33%) and 242 (80.67%) respondents are accessing for writing assignments and for career development programmes respectively. The table also shows that 186 (62%) and 181 (60.33%) respondents use electronic information products for project work and for writing article for publication.

Table 4: Purpose of Accessing Electronic Information Products

Purpose of approach	SMC	SDC	AC	Total
Preparation of notes	68	63	71	202 (67.33)
For writing assignments	93	81	76	250 (83.33)
Project/Dissertation	69	54	63	186 (62)
Writing article for Publication	67	48	66	181(60.33)
To prepare for Seminars	85	81	87	253 (84.33)
Career Development	88	76	78	242 (80.67)

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage on row totals

Types of Frequently Used Electronic Information Products

Table 5 reflects the types of most frequently used electronic information products by the respondents. Maximum number of respondents (73%) use E-mail which is followed by E-journals, WWW, E-books, E-Magazines, Bibliographic databases and E-newspapers. Use of all types of electronic information products is very important for searching relevant information. Hence, it is opined that proper guidance should be given to use all types of resources.

Table 5: Types of Frequently used Electronic Information Products

Types of Electronic Information Products	SMC	SDC	AC	Total
E-Magazines	28	13	19	60 (20)
E-Journals	66	48	46	160 (53.33)
E-Books	24	35	23	82 (27.33)
Bibliographic Databases	18	16	14	48 (16)
World Wide Web	54	34	68	156 (52)
E-News papers	5	3	16	24 (8)
E-Mail	76	59	84	219 (73)

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage on row totals

Preference of Search Engines for Searching Relevant Information

Table 6 indicates that 66.67% of users prefer Yahoo, 55.33% of users prefer Google and 13.33% of users prefer Archive search engines for searching relevant information. It is also observed that 12.67% of users prefer Open Text followed by Netscape (10%), MSN (6.67%) and Alta Vista (4%) respectively.

Table 6: Preference of Search Engines for Searching Relevant Information

Search Engines	SMC	SDC	AC	Total
Google	54	63	49	166 (55.33)
Yahoo	65	56	79	200 (66.67)
Alta Vista	2	4	6	12 (4)
MSN	5	6	9	20 (6.67)
Open Text	16	12	10	38 (12.67)
Netscape	8	9	13	30 (10)
Archive	13	12	15	40 (13.33)

Note : Figures in the parentheses are the percentages on row totals

Computer Access Points for Electronic Information Products

Due to the application of IT, electronic information products have been promoted as having potential to replace printed books. In the digital environment, with the help of computers, these e-products can be accessed. For that, computer access point is essential in college libraries also. This study revealed that 27.33% of the users prefer to access the computer at their home, 20.67% of users in the college library, 20% of users in the computer lab in the departments, 18% of users in the cyber cafe and 14% of users in the computer centers.

Table 7: Computer Access points for Electronic Information Products

Computer Access Points	SMC	SDC	AC	Total
College Library	15	18	29	62 (20.67)
Computer Centre	12	16	14	42 (14)
Cyber café	25	23	6	54 (18)
Computer Lab in the departments	23	17	20	60 (20)
At home	25	26	31	82 (27.33)

Note : Figures in the parentheses are the percentages on row totals

Problems Faced while Accessing Electronic Information Products

Even though, the use of modern technology ensures the speed, accuracy, efficiency, information load handling and potential, while searching electronic information products, the users face many problems. Table 8 shows that 93 (31%) of the respondents indicated that the main problem in accessing the electronic information products is because of the limited access to computers followed by retrieval of too much of information available on the net. 55 (18.33%) respondents are having lack of time to access computers and 43 (14.33%) of the users face the problem of slow accessibility. 39 (13%) of the respondents find it difficult to search for relevant and accurate information. From the study, it is observed that the users must be oriented to use relevant search strategies to get accurate information.

Table 8: Problems Faced while Accessing Electronic Information Products

Items	SMC	SDC	AC	Total
Limited access to computers	31	27	35	93 (31)
Slow accessibility	15	16	12	43 (14.33)
Difficulty in finding relevant information	12	15	12	39 (13)
Too much information retrieved	25	22	23	70 (23.33)
Lack of time	17	20	18	55 (18.33)

Note : Figures in the parentheses are the percentages on row totals

SUGGESTIONS

- Libraries are the reservoirs of knowledge. In order to provide good and efficient services to its readers, the staff of a college library should be moderate and computer literate.
- User education programmes should be organized at regular intervals so that the maximum users can improve their excellence or efficiency in the use of computers and e-resources.
- Awareness should be generated among the users to obtain current information.
- Vast amount of information is available on the internet. Effective use of internet must be encouraged to enhance the existing the library service.
- The technology is giving a valuable opportunity for the libraries to create new avenues for the information seekers. Hence, the college librarians must renew their skills periodically and achieve excellence in providing library services.

CONCLUSION

Collection of information products in any college library depends on the users demand. College libraries are playing key role in providing information to users by adopting new techniques through information and communication technology. In modern electronic era, the user expectations are changing rapidly. Therefore, the librarians have a better role to play in the process.

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